

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 SSM-03 /095 W
-----130935 291108Z /13

R 290728Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5025
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4597

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PORG, PINS, SU, ET
SUBJECT: OAU MEDIATION BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA

REF: KHARTOUM 2497; ADDIS ABABA 4549 (NOTAL)

1. DISCUSSING UPCOMING OAU ETHIOPIA-SUDAN MEDIATION COMMITTEE MEETING IN LIBREVILLE, OAU ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL PETER ONU INDICATED OBTH PARTIES TO DISPUTE WERE COOPERATING FULLY WITH OAU IN ARRANGING MEETING. HE NOTED THAT LEVEL OF PRESS INVECTIVE HAD QUIETED DOWN IN BOTH CAPITALS. ONU QUOTED UNIDENTIFIED AFRICAN HEAD OF STATE, WHO WAS RECENTLY IN KHARTOUM, WHO SAID THAT NIMEIRI HAD TOLD HIM THAT IF ETHIOPIA WOULD SUPPRESS SUDANESE DISIDENT ELEMENTS AND REMOVE THEM FROM PROXIMITY TO SUDANESE BORDER, HE WOULD RECONSIDER HIS SUPPORT OF ETHIOPIAN
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OPPOSITION GROUPS (SEE ALSO ADDIS ABABA 4322 NOTAL).
FROM ETHIOPIAN STANDPOINT, PROGRESS WOULD DEPEND UPON SLOWDOWN AND ULTIMATE CESSATION OF SUDANESE WILLINGNESS TO SERVE AS SUPPLY CONDUITS, TRAINING GROUNDS, AND PROPAGANDA CENTER FOR ERITREANS AND EDU.

2. ONU WAS OF OPINION THAT NIMEIRI'S PUBLIC EXPRES-

SION OF SUPPORT FOR ERITREAN SELF-DETERMINATION IN JANUARY WAS SHORTFUSE REACTION TO ETHIOPIAN PRESS ATTACKS, AND THAT SUDAN WOULD READILY ACCEPT REFERENDUM IN ERITREA, POINTING TO GENUINE AUTONOMY WITHIN ETHIOPIAN BOUNDARIES SHORT OF INDEPENDENCE. HE THOUGHT EMPEROR HAD MADE BASIC MISTAKE IN 1962 BY NOT CONDUCTING REFERENDUM THEN TO LEGITIMATE FULL ANNEXATION. NOW, ONU FEARED, IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE TO CONDUCT ANY KIND OF REFERENDUM, SINCE ERITREANS APPEAR CONVINCED THEY CAN WIN. NEVERTHELESS, REFERENDUM STILL SEEMED TO BE BEST HOPE FOR SOLUTION PRESERVING TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, WHICH WAS ONLY BASIS ON WHICH OAU WOULD OR COULD OPERATE IN ALL THREE MEDIATION COMMITTEES MEETING IN LIBREVILLE.

3. COMMENT: SHOULD SUDANESE RAISE QUESTIONS AT LIBREVILLE OF SOVIET PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA, AS MUKHTAR SUGGEST, THIS WOULD QUICKLY KILL WHATEVER SLIGHT CHANCES THERE MIGHT OTHERWISE BE OF ACHIEVING SOME PROGRESS. ETHIOPIANS WOULD CERTAINLY CONSIDER THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIETS NON-NEGOTIABLE AND HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH CAUSES OF CURRENT DISPUTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS04597
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770272-0471
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977077/aaaaafbc.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 83c1676d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 KHARTOUM 2497, 77 ADDIS ABABA 4549
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1897960
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OAU MEDIATION BETWEEN SUDAN AND ETHIOPIA
TAGS: PGOV, PORG, PINS, SU, ET, OAU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/83c1676d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009